10: d'Orleans--299-300 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 565, 646

"There is an hereditary assembly called the Sena, to which the members of certain families belong. The king can create new members, but cannot remove any, and the [300] Sena is a sort of House of Peers possessing the right of remonstrance. In fact, the Governmental acts bear the preamble, 'The Sena and the King,' the former being given precedence."

68: Mouhot--268-269 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 123, 576, 609, 646

"No event could have caused more sensation here [HD: in Luang Prabang] than the arrival of 'the long-bearded stranger.' From the humblest to the greatest--for even here are distinctions of rank--every one [269] looks on a 'white' as a natural curiosity, and they are not yet satisfied with looking--nothing is talked of but the stranger. When I pass through the town in my white dress, to go to the market or to visit the pagodas or other interesting places, the people crowd round me, and look after me as long as they can catch a glimpse of me. Everywhere I go complete silence reigns, and I am treated as though I were a sovereign or prince, and the council, by order of the king, have given to me as to them power of life or death over his subjects. Poor people! why can I not raise you from the abasement into which you have fallen?"

of Ayuthya. /45/ And even before it disappeared it had been supplanted by Vientiane, which was built some ten kilometers upstream, unless the two cities formed a single immense one or unless the first one moved without changing its name at first 175* 633 648* 631

Capture of Phaï-Nam (Vientiane) Whatever the case may be, the center of resistance against Fa-Ngoun was then called "Phaï-Nam" (thorny bamboos) because of the impenetrable vegetable belt which defended it like veritable ramparts. It resisted repeated assaults and Fa-Ngoun was able to get the better of it only by using a ruse. He had gold and silver projectiles shot at the bamboo enclosure and then simulated a retreat. The besieged army, seeing the royal troops fall back, thought that their delivery was at hand and came out to pick up the precious projectiles. Then the assailants suddenly returned to the charge and entered the city without difficulty (1). Phaya-Phao had to make his submission. 643* 721 175* 725 633 631

1. These tactics are celebrated in several Thaï legends to explain the capture of a stronghold.

He received his pardon and was kept on as governor of the principality.

In memory of this episode, the city was baptized /46/ "Vien-Kham" which signifies "gold enclosure." This was later corrupted to "Vientiane" (sandalwood enclosure) (1)

1. There is permanent confusion in the Laotian chronicles between the Vien-Kham on the banks of the Mékong and the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

Formation of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (1353). Fa-Ngoun, henceforth the uncontested master of a vast kingdom, gave it a strong organization and ruled over it as a despot. 643* 175* 642

He summoned an Oupahat or second king to him to assist him in his political duties and instituted a Council of ministers chosen from the princes of royal blood and arranged in a hierarchy according to their respective ranks and attributions. But he would suffer no infringement on his own authority, neither at court or in the provinces. He took terrible reprisals against the vassals who did not obey his orders blindly, and replaced nearly all of them in succession with mere governors as the fancy took him. /646/

643* Indeed King Zakarine, no matter what his attitude of detachment
648* towards power, was noteworthy for his simplicity, his good sense and
175* his ability to see /323/ the usefulness of certain reforms. For he was
/178/ very poorly seconded by the mandarins of the kingdom council (Senam),
/646/ who were "incompetent men and scoffers dominated by their immediate and individual interests" (1). On the whole, however, the

1. Cf. ibid., p. 78.

642 political and social organization which we found was a good one,
178 and we acted wisely in preserving all the mechanisms of the native administration and in respecting the traditions, customs and mores of the populations throughout all of Laos, insofar as they were compatible with our own institutions (2). This was all the more easy for

2. Thus we were led to suppress radically the slave traffic which was enriching a few Siamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Burmese mandarins. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos (Posthumous edition), Paris, 1911./, pp. 230 ff.

us in that all the Laotian muongs (whether or not they were dependencies of Luang-Prabang) had a similar organization which was a smaller model of that of the kingdom (except for the Senam) and
647 was an obvious vestige of the epic times of Fa-Ngoum and the great
642 State of Lan-Xang (3). Like the king, the governors of /324/
631

3. The following was, in outline, the political organization of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang in 1894:

/643/* At its head the king, the great master of existences (Somdet-Phra-Chao), and the second king, the great master responsible for the preservation of property (Chao-Maha-Oupahat).

Then came the minister princes: the Ratsavong or first prince and right-hand minister; the Ratsabout or second prince and left-hand minister; and the Komakhoune or third and fourth princes and ministers of the center and of the civil services.

/646/ The first three mandarins, who bore the title of Phaya,
/693/ were, in order of importance: 1) the Phaya Muong-Sen or first right-hand mandarin, head of the Senam and head of of justice; 2) the Phaya Muong-Tiane or first left-hand

mandarin and head of the tribunal; 3) the Phaya Muong- 647
Khang or first mandarin of the center and head of the Serv- 642
ice of public works, transports, etc. 631

The Senam was composed of the Phaya Muong-Khoua or /646/
second right-hand mandarin, and of four councillors under the direction of the Phya Muong-Sen.

The judges or Kromakanes, who were under the Phaya /693/
Muong-Sen and the Phaya Muong-Tiane, numbered seven in all and included the Phaya Muong-Sai or second left-hand mandarin.

Last came the mandarins responsible for the collection of /653
taxes, the assembling of labor drafts and the transport of 644/
bamboo, rattan, thatch and pirogues for the king's service and the public services; then the pages and chamberlains or mahaleks, the military leaders, the functionaries responsible for petty tasks inside the palace, the treasurers, storekeepers, etc.

The reader will note the insignificant position reserved /701/
for the military mandarins in this hierarchy. Of Sam-Sene-Thai's powerful army (see above, p. 56), nothing at all remained.

provinces were aided by an Oupahat, a Ratsavong and a Ratsabout who, like the court dignitaries, gave their orders to the tassengs or canton heads who had authority over the village leaders (naibans). By establishing the different government commissions in Laos Pavie therefore strengthened the native authorities in their age-old prerogatives and the princes of Luang-Prabang in /325/ their dynastic rights and privileges. In order to mark their absolute attachment to France and to give more force to their vehement protests against awarding Siam the part of the kingdom situated on the right bank, the latter insisted on receiving, in solemn fashion and as soon as possible, the investiture of the government of the Republic from the commissioner general. After his return from Muong-Sing eight 643*
months later, Pavie drew up on parchment in Hanoi the titles of the old king Oun-Kham, of King Zakarine, of his brother and of the Oupahat Boun-Khong, and on April 19, 1895 proceeded to this important ceremony.

"All those who had a part in the control of affairs," he wrote as he finished the account of his mission, "were present. The entire populace was invited. In the name of the government of the

644 The functionaries responsible for minor duties inside the palace, under the orders of their chief the Maha-Monti, are the:

Maha-Nosit, Lasa-Nosit, Lasa-Mat, Sanet, Sakame-Nane, Latsavat, Out-Thamonti, Sene-Thong-Niot, Sathipavot.

[652] [493] The treasurers, storekeepers and palace guards have the 647 titles of:

Phaya-Vi-Sai-Monthiene, Phone-Seuk-Khoua, Phone-Seuk-Sai.

697 Finally the jailers and scourgers (or executioners) under the command of the king or of the head of the justice department:

Phone-Tesak, Sa-Phakdi, Sa-Dab-Khame, Vong-Phouthone.

635 In the provinces, the head of a muong bears a title which is 631 personal to him, "Phaya" or "Phya," to which he adds that of "Tiao-Muong" and the name of the province, as Phaya-Si-Vorarat-Phrak-Di, Tiao-Muong-Vien-Tiane.

Under his command he has principal mandarins in the number of three, who bear the titles of "Oupahat," "Latsavong" and "Latsaboute." Each of them is generally responsible for the administration of one part of the muong, under the supervision of the "Tiao-Muong."

These high officials are seconded, depending on the importance of the muong, by a larger or smaller number of counselors or judges who bear the titles of "Sen," "Tiane," "Khang," etc.

Muongs are generally divided into cantons, and the heads of the [623] latter bear the title of "Taseng." Each canton includes several villages or "Bans," and each of these has at its head a mayor who is usually called "Pho-Ban" (the father of the village). The head of a village is aided by a kind of council or assembly of notables, the titles of whom are "Pia," "Luong," "Koun," "Sen," "Mune" or "Nai."

643 The four principal leaders of a muong, that is to say the "Tiao-Muong," the "Oupahat," the "Latsavong" and the "Latsaboute" (1), 646

(1) In the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, the heads of muongs bear the following titles: "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong), "Phya-Hua-Pahn" (Oupahat), "Phya-Balat" (Latsavong), "Phya-Kam" (Latsaboute). In accordance with custom, these offices are hereditary and sons succeed their fathers, except for the office of "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong) where the rule is not absolute.

are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

643 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as can-
646 tonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

635 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head
647 with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

647 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang
652 and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

693 In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian
576 administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

192 The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack

Whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.